

## **How do I help my child cope with death?**

Death is a natural part of life, but it can be difficult for parents to console children who are grieving when they are mourning the loss themselves. When your child is confronted with the death of a loved one it's important that they receive emotional support. This is also helpful for parents as they often find that they cope with their own feelings in the process. Children should be included in the cultural traditions that accompany the loss of a loved one as this process can provide another outlet for grief; however, children should not be forced to attend funerals or visit the loved one's resting place unless they feel comfortable doing so.

It's important to speak honestly about death with children and avoid euphemisms. The more concrete the explanation, the more likely they are to understand death's permanence and not fear it. Parents need to be understanding that children often express their emotions through their behavior. If behavioral problems emerge, parents need to spend some time discussing their feelings and should provide children with constructive outlets for their emotions. This could include physical activity or creating a scrapbook about the loved one. Reading books about death is another way that children can come to terms with what has happened. Similarly to adults, children need time to grieve. Love and support each other and together, you will be able to work through this difficult time.